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Identical letters dated 9 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to bring to your attention a matter of grave concern.

Today, it has been confirmed that the terrorist organization Hamas has built a terror tunnel beneath two adjacent United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) elementary schools in the Gaza Strip. The tunnel passes under the Maghazi Elementary Boys A&B School and the Maghazi Preparatory Boys School.

Israel views this information with the utmost seriousness. The discovery of this terror tunnel, operating directly under the classrooms of young children, is not an isolated incident, but rather the latest of deeply concerning attempts by Hamas terrorists to systematically exploit the organs of the United Nations. Such activities not only place the people of Israel and Gaza at risk, but are severely damaging to humanitarian efforts in Gaza.

This latest finding verifies once again that Hamas' cruelty knows no limits, including endangering centres of learning and education, and using children as human shields. This latest abuse is not only a flagrant misuse of United Nations premises and civilian infrastructure, but more importantly, is a direct threat to the safety and security of children.

Time and again, I have warned of Hamas' intentions to continue using civilian infrastructure in future conflict, having already seized materials for this purpose. While Israel seeks to cooperate with the international community to ease the entry of humanitarian aid and construction material into Gaza, Hamas has continuously impeded Gaza's reconstruction, and instead enhanced its terror infrastructure.

Despite the repeated efforts of my delegation, our reports of Hamas' military build-up and use of children in military campaigns have fallen on deaf ears. This time, the international community must not turn a blind eye towards such cynical exploitation.

I call on the Security Council to strongly and unequivocally condemn Hamas and its repeated misuse of civilian infrastructure and designate this group as a terrorist organization. It is of the utmost importance that the Council ensures that all United Nations-affiliated agencies, and especially UNRWA, remain neutral and safeguarded from abuse by terrorist organizations.

Please recycle

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council. I wish to inform you that an identical letter has been sent to Mr. Antònio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative